



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5039

February Session, 2014



AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL-ASSISTED SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-22ee of the 2014 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective from passage*):

4 (a) For purposes of this section, "animal-assisted therapy" means
5 goal-directed intervention in which animals are used as an integral
6 part of the crisis response process to aid individuals who have
7 experienced mental, physical or emotional trauma; "animal-assisted
8 therapy community" means the local or regional entities capable of
9 providing animal-assisted therapy to individuals within the state;
10 [and] "animal-assisted activity" means an activity that involves
11 registered therapy animals interacting with individuals within the
12 state; "animal-assisted activity organization" means any nationally-
13 recognized entity involved in training, evaluating and registering
14 members of the animal-assisted therapy community; and "canine
15 disaster stress relief team" means any entity consisting of handlers and
16 canines that have been trained, evaluated and registered by an animal-
17 assisted activity organization to provide comfort to individuals after
18 traumatic events.

19 (b) Not later than [January] July 1, 2014, the Commissioner of

20 Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, develop
 21 and implement training for certain employees of the Department of
 22 Children and Families and mental health care providers on (1) the
 23 healing value of the human-animal bond for children, (2) the value of
 24 therapy animals in dealing with traumatic situations, and (3) the
 25 benefit of [an] animal-assisted activity, animal-assisted therapy
 26 [program] and a canine disaster stress relief team.

27 (c) Not later than [January] October 1, 2014, the Commissioner of
 28 Children and Families, in consultation with the Commissioner of
 29 Agriculture and within available appropriations, shall identify a
 30 coordinated volunteer canine [crisis response] disaster stress relief
 31 team. [Such team shall consist of various handlers and canines that
 32 have been trained, evaluated and registered by an animal-assisted
 33 activity organization to provide aid to individuals during and after
 34 traumatic events.] Such team shall operate on a volunteer basis and
 35 shall be available to provide animal-assisted therapy within twenty-
 36 four hours of receiving notice to do so.

37 (d) Not later than [July 1, 2014] January 1, 2015, the Commissioner
 38 of Children and Families, in consultation with the Governor's
 39 Prevention Partnership and the animal-assisted therapy community,
 40 shall, within available appropriations, develop [a crisis response] an
 41 animal-assisted activity program [utilizing the services of the
 42 coordinated volunteer canine crisis response team identified pursuant
 43 to subsection (c) of this section] to provide animal-assisted therapy and
 44 animal-assisted activity to children and youths living with trauma and
 45 loss.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	17a-22ee
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KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*